MUSLIM STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

PRESS RELEASE

Monday, September 29 2014

For Immediate Release.

The MSA wishes to extend our condolences to everybody who has been touched by the trail of tragic events that have beset the community in recent weeks. We particularly send our deepest condolences and respects to the family of the young man killed by police earlier this week. Our thoughts and prayers are with you in these troubling times.

The array of recent events, including the introduction of the anti-terror laws into Parliament on Wednesday the 24th of September, 2014; the vilification and demonisation of Muslims in the media; the irresponsible approach of the government in contributing towards increasing levels of Islamophobia; the unnecessary lifting of the terror threat levels to high; and the reckless decision to involve Australia – once again – in a foreign conflict in the Middle East have all resulted in a feeling of anger and despair amongst young Muslims living in Victoria and Australia.

As representatives of Muslim youth in Victoria, we feel concerned with the current direction of public sentiment towards the Muslim community. The above incidents have left young Victorian Muslims feeling pressured, terrorised and confused. Increased reports of harassment across the country have led to apprehensiveness towards public interactions and an increased concern for the safety of friends and family. There is a widespread feeling of abandonment being expressed amongst Muslim youth, particularly towards government and police, who are felt to be contributing to the problem rather than genuinely addressing the rising levels of harassment and violence we face on a daily basis. The public stances of many Muslim leaders have also been unhelpful in addressing these serious concerns.

We ask the government to undertake genuine and sincere measures to dissipate the rising level of Islamophobia in this country, and to reconsider many of its recent actions given the discriminatory repercussions they entail. Genuine consultation with all facets of the Muslim community, and not simply those that government agrees with, is required to deal with the challenges we all face in a mature manner. We also ask the media to be more responsible in its reporting of Muslims, so as not to fan the flames of racism.

We would like to extend our warmest thanks to members of the broader society who have stood by Muslims in these difficult times; your support is greatly appreciated.

The removal of fundamental rights and the quashing of political dissent will in no way address the fundamental issues facing our society, but will instead aggravate tensions and create the problems it seeks to resolve.

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The Muslim Students Association of Victoria is a representative body of University Student Islamic Societies across the state of Victoria.